

Serial No. 10/786,139
Attorney Docket No. NVL 3289
Customer No. 35391

Reply to Office Action Dated February 7, 2006
Reply Dated April 12, 2006

AMENDMENTS IN THE SPECIFICATION:

In the Specification:

The specification has been amended to incorporate references to replacement Fig. 1, new Fig. 2 and tractor 12. No new matter is believed to have been added.

Please replace the paragraph beginning at page 3, line 1, with the following amended paragraph:

--Additional advantages and features will become apparent as the subject invention becomes better understood by reference to the accompanying ~~drawing~~ drawings, taken in conjunction with the accompanying description, in which similarly-referenced characters refer to similarly-referenced parts, and in which:

~~The sole FIGURE~~ Fig. 1 is a schematic illustration of a minesweeper embodying the invention: and

Fig. 2. is a schematic illustration of the minesweeper as it would be coupled to and pushed by a tractor in one embodiment.—

Please replace the paragraph beginning at page 3, line 11, with the following amended paragraph:

-- ~~The FIGURE shows~~ Figures 1 and 2 show the minesweeper 11 incorporating the invention. The minesweeper has a two-sided frame 13 adapted to be coupled to and pushed by a tractor 12 (~~not shown~~ Fig. 2). A rake 15 is pivoted from each side of the frame by respective pairs of coupling bars 17 and 19 of different lengths so that as the rake moves away from the frame to bury itself in the soil, the coupling bars rotate it to a less aggressive digging angle that prevents the rake from stalling the tractor. The minesweeper as thus far described follows the teachings of my U.S. patent No. 6,330,920 B1, the disclosure of which is hereby incorporated by reference.—

Please replace the paragraph beginning at page 4, line 5, with the following amended paragraph:

--While the catching and sifting means may take a variety of forms, conveniently it may take the form shown in the ~~FIGURE~~ Fig. 1 of a plurality of spaced fixed vanes 21 running across the bottom of the frame 13 from one side of the frame to the other side, two pairs of rollers,

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one pair of rollers 23 mounted on the one side of the frame and the other pair of rollers 25 mounted on the other side of the frame, and a pair of endless chains 27 and 29 running across the top of the frame and around the rollers. In addition, the catching and sifting means includes a plurality of spaced beams 31 carried by the pair of chains, the beams lying across the spaced fixed vanes, a plurality of teeth 33 mounted on the beams, and a means 35, such as a hydraulic motor, for example a Kawasaki® company model STAFFA HMB080 hydraulic motor, for turning the rollers.—

Please replace the paragraph beginning at page 4, line 16, with the following amended paragraph:

--In operation, the frame 13 is coupled to and pushed by a tractor 12 over a minefield (Fig. 2). The rake 15 moves away from the frame to bury itself in the soil and the coupling bars rotate it to a less aggressive digging angle. The rake 15 digs into the topsoil layer and mines, soil, rocks and other objects buried in the soil pass over the rake and are caught by the vanes 21. The hydraulic motor 35 turns the rollers 25 to move the chains 27 and 29 around a loop at two to four miles per hour (2-4 mph) so that the teeth 33 mounted on the beams 31 rake the soil and the objects sideways along the vanes 21, the teeth partially meshing with the vanes and forcing the soil to fall through while mines, and other objects larger than the vane spacing are carried along the tops of the vanes and are ejected to the side of the frame 13.—